Works are made to the States depending upon the condition of the NHs, the works sanctioned for development/improvement of NHs, and overall availability of funds. However, the allocation made during 2008-09 for development of NHs under NH (Original) for the NHs entrusted with the State Government of Rajasthan is Rs. 106 crore and the total length of NHs entrusted with the State Government of Rajasthan is about 4132 km.

(b) and (c) The State-wise allocations of funds are made for carrying out various types of maintenance and repair (M and R) activities on NHs, such as Ordinary Repairs (OR), Periodical Renewal (PR), Flood Damage Repairs (FDR) and Special Repairs (SR), depending upon the overall availability of funds, length of NHs entrusted with the concerned States as well as their lane configurations, outstanding commitments for sanctioned works for FDR and SR, etc. and progress of expenditure.

National Highways in Assam

1976. SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has proposed any new road project during the year 2008-09 under NHAI in Assam;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the status of alternative National Highway from Guwahati *via* Hajo-Barpeta Lengtisinga to Abhyapuri in the district comprising Kamrup, Nalbari, Barpeta and Bongaigaon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not airse.

(c) There is no such proposal.

Foreign officers for Indian ships

1977. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government has allowed the requests from Indian ship owners to employ foreign officers on board their ships in view of the severe shortage of trained maritime officers in India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the conditions which have to be fulfilled by Indian ship owners before they are allowed to employ foreign officers;

(d) whether it is a fact that our country does not have the necessary infrastructure to train our youth for maritime industry;

(e) if so, the details of infrastructure available for training in maritime industry; and

(f) the steps taken to improve the situation in the near future?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Permission for employment of foreign nationals on Indian flag vessels is given on case-to-case basis.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) There are four training institutes in the Government sector and 121 training institutes in the private sector imparting pre-sea and post-sea training in engineering and nautical disciplines. The Government has established this year the Indian Maritime University (IMU) with Headquarters in Chennai and campuses at Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai and Visakhapatnam in order to improve the situation.

(f) The following measures have also been taken by the Government to improve the shortage of maritime officers in the country:—

(i) The ban on approval of pre-sea officer's course has been lifted.

(ii) New scheme has been devised to facilitate the ratings to become officers quickly by reducing the sea time requirement.

(iii) New scheme has been introduced for science graduates to become Nautical Officers on a fast track basis.

(iv) Candidates of fishery graduation have been allowed to enter the merchant navy career by doing only Standard of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping (STCW) Courses by relaxing the requirement of pre-sea training.

Completion of NH projects in Bihar

1978. SHRI RAJNITI PRASAD: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that all the works under National Highways Development Project (NHDP) in Bihar are behind their respective scheduled time of completion;

(b) whether it is a fact that even projects of 1st and 2nd round have not been started so far in Bihar;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(d) the extra cost on account of escalation due to delay in projects in Bihar;

(e) the steps being taken by Government to expedite completion of those highway projects in Bihar;

(f) the phase presently going on in NHAI; and

(g) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) Yes Sir. Slow progress has been reported in respect of some projects under National Highways Development Project (NHDP) in Bihar due to initial